N° 21

The evil Effects of War, and the Blessings of Peace, represented

IN A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

CHELMSFORD,

On the 25th of APRIL, 1749.

BEING THE

Day appointed for a Public THANKSGIVING, on Account of the happy Restoration of PEACE.

By *NATHANIEL BALL*, K
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—— *Live in PEACE, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you.* 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

Pax decet alma hominem, gaudet fera bellua Bello:
Arma amens amat, arma cupit, quicunque laborem
Odit iners, et inops, qui vivere luxuriosè
Vult, quamvis nequeat, non respondente crumena.
Palingen. Zod. Vit. Lib. Capricornus.

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PSALM XLVI. 9.

He maketh Wars to ceaſe unto the End of the Earth; He breaketh the Bow, and cutteth the Spear in ſunder; He burneth the Chariots in the Fire.

AMONG the many Evils which perplex and diſhonour human Life, that barbarous Practice of Men's fighting and ſlaying one another is in itſelf the moſt ſhocking and deteſtable. To ſee a Race of Beings whom God has made all of one Blood, and deſigned as Inſtruments of each other's Happineſs, having furniſhed them with Faculties proper to that End, to ſee ſuch

Beings perverſely thwarting the Deſign of their Creation by ſtudying to make each other *miſerable*; is not only a Diſgrace to Human Nature, but a wicked Affront to the Divine Being. How juſt is that calm, but ſtrong Rebuke of *Moſes* againſt the two *Hebrews*, whom he ſaw fighting together, *Sirs, ye are Brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?* (Acts vii. 26.) May we not with greater Emphaſis apply the ſame Rebuke to the Fraternity of Mankind, who are all the Offſpring of one univerſal Parent, Partakers all of one common Nature, and born to one and the ſame Happineſs.

Now what Cauſe may be aſſigned for the Production of an Effect ſo monſtrous and unnatural as that of War?——The more general and remote Cauſe is the *native Imperfection* and *Infirmity* of human Creatures. The more particular and immediate one, is the *Ambition* and

Avarice

Avarice of Individuals. Mankind, by the very Frame of their Nature, are prone to commit Acts of Error, Folly, and Vice; and by Consequence to do Mischief to one another. This is the general Source from whence all public and private Dissention originally flow. And when the supreme, or subordinate Governors of a Nation are stimulated by extravagant Lust of Empire, or an immoderate Thirst after Riches and Honour, they will be apt to forget the Laws of Humanity, and by that Means disturb the Order and Harmony of God's moral Creation. Hence arises War; which when commenced upon Principles of Honesty and Self-Defence, with a Desire only to secure undoubted Rights and Liberties, is perfectly just and lawful. But when it proceeds from Pride, and a sordid Love of Gain, with a View only to enlarge Dominions, and aggrandize Power, it is then downright wicked and unjustifiable.

But however just or unjust the Causes of War may be, the Effects of it are on all Sides very dreadful. Thousands of Lives are cut off in a Moment; and no Circumstance either of Age, Beauty, Sense, or even Virtue, can escape the bloody Jaws of that undistinguishing Monster. He mows down all Orders of Men, *high and low, rich and poor, one with another*. Nor are Men's *Lives* made the only Sacrifice; their *Fortunes* lie deeply at Stake, and are often ruin'd irrecoverably. Many disconsolate Widows, and helpless Orphans, are left in a State of Indigence, deploring the untimely Deaths of their protecting Relatives. The Stream of national Prosperity is stopt by the Stagnation of Trade. That vital Spring of Riches and worldly Comforts *sickens* and *dies*. And even *Liberty*, the sweetest of all social Blessings, is often made to bleed and expire at the Feet of ambitious Robbers.

If ſuch therefore be the horrible Effects of War, may we not juſtly ſay, in the Language of Scripture, *How beautiful are the Feet of them who bring glad Tidings of Peace?*——How amiable is it to ſee the Rulers of this Earth unite their Endeavours to appeaſe the deſtructive Tumults of War! Do they not deſerve ſome Tribute of Gratitude who ſtrive, though but as *ſecondary Cauſes*, or Inſtruments under Heaven, to promote Peace in the World? But what Efforts of Thankſgiving, what Returns of Love, are due to the great God of Peace, the ſovereign Compoſer of all human Differences? *To Him that ſitteth* (as the ſublime Prophet ſpeaketh) *upon the Circle of the Earth, and the Inhabitants thereof are as Graſhoppers; that ſtretcheth out the Heavens as a Curtain, and ſpreadeth them out as a Tent to dwell in; that bringeth the Princes to nothing, and maketh the Judges of the Earth as Vanity.* (Iſaiah xl. 22, 23.) *He it is that mak-*

eth Wars to ceaſe unto the End of the Earth; He breaketh the Bow, and cutteth the Spear in ſunder; He burneth the Chariots in the Fire.

You perceive at firſt Sight how theſe Words repreſent Almighty God as overthrowing all the direful Engines of War. I need only obſerve, that the Phraſe of *burning the Chariots* alludes to a Cuſtom which the ancient *Egyptians* and the *Canaanites* had of bringing Chariots into the Field of Battle. Theſe the Scripture calls *Chariots of Iron*, becauſe their Poles, Wheels and Axles, were armed with ſharp Scythes. " They were placed a-
" long the Front of the Line of Battle;
" and beſides the Terror they were apt
" to ſtrike into the Enemy, they ſeldom
" failed of breaking their Ranks, and
" ſometimes put the Adverſary to a total
" Rout. The only Way of preventing
" it was by killing the Horſes before
" they came too near, or if that failed,
" by

" by opening a Paſſage to them *". It was on Account of theſe formidable Machines that we are told (in *Judges* i. 19.) that the Tribe of *Judah*, though they had conquered the Inhabitants of the *Mountains*, yet could not drive out the Inhabitants of the *Vallies*. And the Reaſon was, becauſe *they had Chariots of Iron*, which did moſt execution in *plain* Countries. And ſo when *Jabin* King of *Canaan* made War againſt *Iſrael*, *they cried unto the Lord*, being ſtruck with Terror, *becauſe he had nine hundred Chariots of Iron*. (Judges iv. 3.) But what are all theſe dreadful Weapons, when the Almighty oppoſes. He, with inexpreſſible Facility, and ten thouſand Times quicker than Thought itſelf, *can break the Bow, and cut the Spear in ſunder, and burn the Chariots in the Fire*; and at once *make Wars to ceaſe unto the End of the Earth*. In the Proſecution of this Subject, I ſhall,

 1ſt. Con-

* Vide *Univerſal Hiſtory*, Vol. III. p. 182.

1ſt. CONSIDER the Divine Omnipotence in general, and with a View to that particular Character of it mentioned in the Text, of *making Wars to ceaſe in the World.*

2dly, POINT out the great Advantages of Peace reſulting from hence. And then,

3dly, FOR Application of the Whole, ſhew what Obligations of Gratitude are due to God for theſe Advantages; and what Sort of Behaviour we ſhould put on in reſpect to our King and Country.

1ſt. I SHALL conſider the Divine Omnipotence in general, and with a View to that particular Character of it mentioned in the Text, of *making Wars to ceaſe unto the End of the Earth.*

FROM

FROM the general Ideas of Creation and Providence we derive our Notions of the Divine Omnipotence. Both theſe Ideas, in their very Nature, imply the Exiſtence of Power. For Creation is nothing but an Exertion of Power in the Production of various Beings. And Providence denotes the Preſervation and Continuance of thoſe Beings. And moſt certainly the ſame Power is requiſite *to ſupport* the World as *to create* it. All the Works of Nature, with irreſiſtable Force of Demonſtration, proclaim the Truth of this Aſſertion. We ſee the Divine Power daily diſplayed in the Heavens, in the Earth, and in the Waters. Every Plant, and every Animal ſhows it; and our own Natures are a continued Demonſtration of the ſame. We feel a divine Energy within us by means of our ſenſitive and rational Faculties. And in all the outward Tranſactions of human Life, as well as the internal Diſpoſitions of Human Nature, God exerts his Al-

mighty

mighty Power: Not indeed to controul the Free-Agency of human Creatures, but to continue the Uſe of it, to ſupport Mankind in Exiſtence, to preſerve the Fabric of the World *in Order*, to ſee the Laws of Nature keep on their regular Courſe, and ſo to *ſuppreſs Evil*, and *communicate Good*. In all theſe Particulars the Divine Power exerts itſelf for the Happineſs of his Creatures. Though our narrow Conceptions will not permit us to comprehend in what preciſe Manner this is done, yet we have no more Reaſon to doubt the Truth of it, than that the Sun chears the Earth, and helps Vegetation, though we do not ſee all the ſecret Ways by which it operates.

SINCE then the Omnipotence of God is thus active throughout all the natural and the moral World, we have ſufficient Reaſon to believe it has a proportionable Influence over the momentous Concerns of *States* and *Kingdoms*; and conſequently has ſupreme Efficacy *in making*

Wars

Wars to ceaſe unto the End of the Earth. For if Peace be the greateſt Bleſſing any Nation can enjoy, the Goodneſs of God will naturally lead him to exert his Power in producing that Bleſſing.

WHETHER this Effect be wrought by any extraordinary and ſupernatural Diſplay of Divine Power, or by the common Laws of Nature, the Thing is ſtill the ſame. Though God indeed governs the World by ſecond Cauſes, by outward Means and Inſtruments. But his Power and Interpoſition, even in human Affairs, are no more to be deny'd than that of a Prince who ſends Ambaſſadors into a foreign Country with Inſtructions to execute his Will. The Movements of a curious Machine do not *the leſs* diſcover a *wiſe Contriver*, merely becauſe *the Artiſt* himſelf is not always ſeen who firſt ſet them to work. Many Operations of God's Power are often undiſcerned through our Want of Attention. He *nevertheleſs* (as holy *Job* ſpeaks)

ſpeaks) *doth great Things paſt finding out; yea, and Wonders without Number. Lo! he goeth by me, and I ſee him not; he paſſeth on alſo, but I perceive him not.* (Job ix. 10, 11.) He who *ſtilleth the raging of the Sea, when the Waves thereof ariſe*, can, with equal Eaſe, reſtrain the Ambition of Princes, and *the Madneſs of the People.* He can *turn the Hearts of the Diſobedient to the Wiſdom of the Juſt*; and ſo reconcile the Differences of jarring Nations, and bring about the Bleſſings of Peace. This glorious Event the Divine Power has actually brought to paſs. *He hath made our Enemies to be at Peace with us.* Let us therefore ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *This is the Day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.* (Pſ. cxviii. 24.) But to ſee with what Propriety our Joy may be excited on this Occaſion, let us conſider,

2. UNDER the ſecond Head of this Diſcourſe, *the great Advantages of Peace.*

And,

And, 1ſt. It ſaves the Lives of vaſt Multitudes of People, and prevents thoſe horrid Scenes of Blood and Slaughter which always attend a State of War. By this Means the Tranquility and Comfort of many private Families is ſecured, whoſe Welfare often depends upon the Life of ſome dear Relation, which is brought to an untimely Death by the cruel Stroke of Arms; like a Flower nipt in its Bloom by ſome chilling Blaſt of Wind.

By *Peace* even Kingdoms are eſtabliſhed, and the Liberties of free States are hinder'd from falling a Prey to the Conqueſt of deſpotic Tyrants.

2. Another great Advantage of Peace is *the Flouriſhing of Trade*. All Commerce receives a fatal Wound in Time of War. The Circulation of this nouriſhing Blood of the Body politic ſtagnates at once: And by that Misfortune alone, Multitudes of Families are brought

to Poverty. But when Peace revives, the dying Lamp of *Trade* rekindles its glowing Ardor, diſperſes a generous Flame about the Houſe of Induſtry, and inſpires the buſy World with new and chearful Hopes of Gain.

3. AGAIN; Peace not only increaſes Trade, but makes Arts and Sciences flouriſh with it. Theſe indeed are the Springs by which all the Machinery of Traffic is put in Motion, and both the one and the other reciprocally promote and reward each other. When the Tumults of War are over, the Minds of Men will be naturally calm and ſerene; and conſequently better diſpoſed for Contemplation. In ſuch a Situation therefore the Sciences will be more like to flouriſh. But when the public Attention is taken up with Rumours of Battles and the Noiſe of Arms, few are at Leiſure to court the Muſes, there will be but few to *invent* or *improve* Literature, and few to *encourage* it.

4. AMONG

4. AMONG other Advantages of Peace, we may reckon *the Diminution of Taxes*. All Nations that labour under the Misfortune of War muſt ſuſtain extraordinary Expences. The Preparations neceſſary, even for the common Defence of a Kingdom, require great Sums of Money. For *Money* is the Sinews of Power, without which no War can be carried on to any Advantage. In *arbitrary* Kingdoms, the levying of Money for this Purpoſe is a ſore Burden upon the Subjects. And even in *free* States, the Adminiſtration is often puzzled how to raiſe the neceſſary Subſidies to the Satisfaction of the People. But in a Time of *Peace* the Neceſſity of theſe Expences ceaſes, and the Increaſe of Taxes drops of courſe. If any of thoſe which have been raiſed during the War ſhould be continued for ſome while after, there may be juſt Reaſons for it; and no doubt but the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Legiſlature will (when it is proper)

take them off. Thus you may ſee the great Advantages flowing from Peace; the Conſideration of which brings me,

3. In the third Part of this Diſcourſe, to ſhow what Obligations of Gratitude are due to *God* for theſe Advantages, and what Sort of Behaviour we ſhould put on in reſpect to our *King* and *Country*.

Since the Divine Power is ſo eminently diſplayed for the Good of Mankind in general, and in particular for the Benefit of States and Kingdoms, in giving them the Bleſſings of Peace; and ſince theſe Bleſſings are ſo large and diffuſive, and pregnant with Pleaſures; what Praiſe, what Homage, what endleſs Thankſgiving is due to God, the Fountain of all this Good? We may ſay with the wiſe Son of *Sirach*, *How ſhall we be able to magnify him? for he is great above all his Works. The Lord is terrible and very great, and marvellous is his Power. When you glorify the Lord,*

exalt

exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed: and when you exalt him, put forth all your Strength, and be not weary, for you can never go far enough. (Ecclus. xliii. 28, 29, 30.)

We ſhould exert all the Powers of our reaſonable Nature, and expreſs our Gratitude to God in the moſt reaſonable Ways, *i. e.* by Prayer, by Contemplation, and above all by Obedience to his Laws. For (as the wiſe Preacher juſt quoted obſerves) *He that keepeth the Law, bringeth Offerings enow; he that taketh heed to the Commandment, offereth a Peace-Offering. He that requiteth a good Turn, offereth fine Flour, and he that giveth Alms, ſacrificeth Praiſe. To depart from Wickedneſs is a Thing pleaſing to the Lord, and to forſake Unrighteouſneſs is a Propitiation.* (Ecclus. xxxv. 1, 2, 3.)

You ſee plainly from theſe Words that Works of *Juſtice* and *Mercy* to our Fellow-

Fellow-Creatures are the moſt acceptable *Praiſes* to God. And this indeed is agreeable to the Reaſon of the Thing itſelf. For as God is above all Want, our verbal Expreſſions of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, cannot poſſibly do *Him* any Service. But when we imitate his moral Character, that noble Part of it in particular, *his Benevolence to Mankind*, we then approach to the neareſt Reſemblance of the Divine Nature, and conſequently pleaſe him moſt. This Conſideration therefore naturally leads me to add a few Words by Way of Application, concerning what Sort of Behaviour we ought to put on in reſpect to our *King* and *Country*.

WITH regard to our *Sovereign*, we ought to pay him the moſt *faithful Allegiance*, *Honour*, and *dutiful Submiſſion*. The Laws of the Land injoyn this upon us; the Laws of Chriſtianity require the ſame, and, we may add, the Mildneſs and Equity of his Majeſty's Government have

have render'd him always deſerving, not only of the ſtricteſt Fidelity, but of the higheſt *Affection* and *Eſteem*.

As to the Behaviour we ſhould ſhow to our *Country*, this conſiſts in a chearful Submiſſion to thoſe Laws which are made for its Welfare, in avoiding all ſeditious Speeches and Practices, and in ſtriving *to lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in Godlineſs and Honeſty*. (1 Tim. li. 2.)

We ſhould in particular lay aſide thoſe narrow, ſelfiſh Notions of *Party*, which lead us oftentimes to hate and perſecute thoſe who differ from us. Every one has, doubtleſs, a Right to judge for himſelf in Matters of *Politics* as well as *Religion*. But no one has a Right to ſacrifice *Truth* and *Common Senſe*, out of Zeal to his own Side. Much leſs has any one a Right to throw off *Good-nature*, *Moderation* and *Charity*.

If in carrying on the arduous Task of Government any Mistakes should happen, (and what Governments are without Mistakes?) every one is not a competent Judge what they are, and how to remedy them. We should not therefore be hasty to censure what we do not understand, but leave it to the proper Persons to correct Mistakes, or redress Grievances, in a reasonable, calm, and peaceable Manner. If we cannot all preserve an *Unity* of *Faith* in Affairs of *Politics*, any more than in *Religion*, yet let us, as St. *Paul* advises, *with all Lowliness, and Meekness, with long Suffering, forbearing one another in Love, endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* (Eph. iv. 3.)

F I N I S.